

X. Living With Alzheimer's Disease

Introduction

Caring¹⁸⁹ for someone with Alzheimer's¹⁹⁰ disease or other forms¹⁹¹ of dementia can be very difficult. Alzheimer's disease¹⁹² is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain. It is the most common form of dementia. Profound changes in personality and mental functioning are not unusual. Often, our relationships are changed significantly by this.

Signs of Dementia

Signs of dementia can vary from one person to another. Frequently they include:

- Increasing levels of forgetfulness
- An inability to carry out simple tasks
- Difficulty in remembering words or in forming coherent sentences
- Confusion, hallucinations, or paranoia

If dementia is suspected, consult a physician familiar with Alzheimer's disease as soon as possible. Sometimes medications, underlying illness such as strokes, depression, or other conditions, mimic dementia. When this is the case, problems can be corrected, improved, or controlled.

Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease¹⁹³ is not reversible. However, early diagnosis is important because the progression of the disease can often be slowed with the help of medications and the symptoms also can be managed. Early detection means time for everyone to plan ahead.

Most caregivers want to know what to expect, how to deal with changes that result from Alzheimer's¹⁹⁴, help that might be needed, and how to find it. Persons with Alzheimer's disease¹⁹⁵ and their caregivers¹⁹⁶ can find help through the

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.caregiving.com/>

¹⁹⁰ <http://www.aoa.gov/factsheets/alz.html>

¹⁹¹ <http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about/causes.html>

¹⁹² <http://www.aoa.gov/alz/index.asp>

¹⁹³ <http://www.alzheimers.org/pubs/adfact.html>

¹⁹⁴ http://www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/disorders/alzheimersdisease_doc.htm

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.docguide.com/news/content.nsf/PatientResAllCateg/Alzheimer's%20Disease?OpenDocument>

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.vh.org/Patients/IHB/GeriatricEducation/AlzheimersTOC.html>

Alzheimer's Association¹⁹⁷ and the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center¹⁹⁸. These organizations provide excellent information to caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease.

Selected Readings and Resources

- Listing of Alzheimer's Disease research centers¹⁹⁹
- Local Alzheimer's groups²⁰⁰.
- The Alzheimer's Research Organization²⁰¹ site lists books, national and international organizations and research links.
- Go to the Northwestern University's Alzheimer's Disease Core Center²⁰² for information about Alzheimer's disease and care options.

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.alz.org/>

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.alzheimers.org/>

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.usc.edu/dept/gero/ADRC/otherlinks.htm>

²⁰⁰ <http://home.sprintmail.com/~alznet/page8.html>

²⁰¹ <http://www.alzheimers-research.org/links.html>

²⁰² <http://www.brain.nwu.edu/core/index.htm>